

Clearly, it was the next step that was the most delicate: getting Mary aboard the yacht. This was both the crux and the *finale* of the whole thing: for Uncle Elbert was to be waiting for them, in a closed carriage, at a private dock near 130th Street (Peter remaining in Hunston to notify him by telephone of the start down), and Varney's responsibilities were over when the *Cypriani* turned her nose homeward. But here lay the thin ice. If anything should happen to go wrong at the moment when they were coaxing Mary on the yacht, if there was a leak in their plans or anybody suspected anything, he saw that the situation might be exceedingly awkward. The penalties for being fairly caught with the goods promised to be severe. As to kidnapping, he certainly remembered reading in the newspapers that some States punished it with death. At any rate, maybe the natives would try to thrash him and Peter. In hopeful moments he conjured up visions of the deuce to pay.

But, after all, he was going to Hunston, whether he liked it or not, simply because Uncle Elbert had asked him. The lonely old gentleman, he knew, loved him like a son: he had turned straight to him in his hour of need. This had touched the young man, and had finally made up his mind for him. Moreover Mary, a spoiled little piece who was suffered to set her smug childish will against the combined wills of both her parents, aroused his keenest antipathy. To put her in her place, to teach her that children must obey their parents in the Lord, was a duty to society, to the State. What Uncle Elbert wanted with such a child, he could